

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6588

INFO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 2104

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, CH, US, SW

SUBJECT: FIRST SIGNS OF TRADE POLICY CHANGE?

1. THE ROUTINE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE COMPLETION OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE FALL CANTON FAIR ON OCTOBER 10 CONTAINS AN UNUSUAL ELEMENT, ABSENT FROM SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS IN RECENT YEARS, IN THE FORM OF A MAO QUOTE DATING BACK TO 1949: "THE CHINESE PEOPLE WISH TO HAVE FRIENDLY COOPERATION WITH THE PEOPLES OF ALL COUNTRIES AND TO RESUME AND EXPAND INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ORDER TO DEVELOP PRODUCTION AND PROMOTE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY."

2. THE USE OF THIS OLD AND DATED MAO QUOTE IS ESPECIALLY STRIKING SINCE ITS LAST CITATION, IN OUR MEMORY, WAS ITS USE IN THE 1974 NO. 1 ISSUE OF FOREIGN TRADE MAGAZINE IN A LEAD ARTICLE BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE LI CHIANG ENTITLED "NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN FOREIGN TRADE." THERE THE MAO QUOTE APPEARED IN THE CONTEXT OF LI'S

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EXPLANATION OF THE VALUE OF FOREIGN TRADE, BEING FOL-

LOWED DIRECTLY BY THE STATEMENT: "OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES AND MORE, ACTING UPON THIS TEACHING OF CHAIRMAN MAO ON FOREIGN TRADE, CHINA HAS OPENED UP TRADE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY AND MUTUAL BENEFIT, TO LEARN FROM OTHER COUNTRIES' MERITS AND TO OBTAIN NECESSARY MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES THROUGH EXCHANGE. THIS IS AN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF MAKING FOREIGN THINGS SERVE CHINA....."

3. ANOTHER MINOR BUT UNUSUALLY POSITIVE MOVEMENT IN THE TRADE POLICY FRONT, REPORTED BY SWEDISH EMBOFFS, IS THE REMARK BY VICE-MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRDE CHAI SHU-FAN TO SWEDISH TRADE OFFICIALS THAT "TRADE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WILL IMPROVE. THESE ARE NO EMPTY WORDS."

4. THAT CHANGES IN THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP COULD RESULT SO RAPIDLY IN PUBLIC INDICATIONS OF MAJOR CHANGES IN FOREIGN TRADE POLICY IS SURPRISING. CONCRETE RESULTS MAY BE MUCH SLOWER IN COMING. IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT ALL THE STRAWS IN THE WIND SEEM TO BE BLOWING IN THE SAME DIRECTION.
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